

Turkmen language

Turkmen (*Türkmençe*, Түркменче, تۆرکمنچه, [tʏɾkmɛntʃɛ] or *Türkmen dili*, Түркмен дили, تۆرکمن دили, [tʏɾkmɛn dɪlɪ]) is a Turkic language spoken by the Turkmens of Central Asia, mainly of Turkmenistan, Iran and Afghanistan. It has an estimated five million native speakers in Turkmenistan, a further 719,000 speakers in Northeastern Iran^[4] and 1.5 million people in Northwestern Afghanistan.^[5] Turkmen has official status in Turkmenistan, but it does not have official status in Iran or Afghanistan, where big communities of ethnic Turkmens live. Turkmen is also spoken to lesser varying degrees in Turkmen communities of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan and by diaspora communities, primarily in Turkey and Russia.^[6]

Turkmen is a member of the Oghuz branch of the Turkic languages. The standardized form of Turkmen (spoken in Turkmenistan) is based on the Teke dialect, while Iranian Turkmen uses mostly the Yomud dialect, and Afghan Turkmen uses Ersary variety.^[7] Turkmen is closely related to Gagauz, Qashqai, Crimean Tatar, Turkish and Azerbaijani, sharing varying degrees of mutual intelligibility with each of those languages.^[8] According to linguistic comparative studies, the closest relative of Turkmen is the Azerbaijani language.^[9]

Elsewhere in Iran, the Turkmen language comes second after the Azerbaijani language in terms of the number of speakers of Turkic languages of Iran.^[10]

Iraqi and Syrian "Turkmen" speak dialects that form a continuum between Turkish and Azerbaijani, in both cases heavily influenced by Arabic. These varieties are not Turkmen in the sense of this article.

The Turkmen language is notable for having dental fricatives; Bashkir is the only other Turkic language to have these sounds.

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Turkmen	
<i>Türkmençe</i> , <i>Türkmen dili</i> , <div>Түркменче, Түркмен дили,<div>تۆرکمن ديليتۆرکمنچه</div></div>	
Native to	Turkmenistan, Russia, Iran, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria
Ethnicity	Turkmens
Native speakers	6.7 million (2009–2015) ^[1]
Language family	Turkic <ul style="list-style-type: none">Common Turkic<ul style="list-style-type: none">Oghuz<ul style="list-style-type: none">Eastern Oghuz<ul style="list-style-type: none">Turkmen
Writing system	Latin (Turkmen alphabet), Cyrillic, Arabic Turkmen Braille
Official status	
<div>Official language in</div>	 Turkmenistan
<div>Recognised minority language in</div>	 Afghanistan ^[a]
Language codes	
ISO 639-1	tk (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcodes_name.php?iso_639_1=tk)
ISO 639-2	tuk (https://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/php/langcode

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	s_name.php?code_ID=461)
ISO 639-3	tuk
Glottolog	turk1304 (http://glottolog.org/resource/1anguoid/id/turk1304) ^[3]
Linguasphere	Part of 44-AAB-a

Classification

Turkmen is a member of the East Oghuz branch of the Turkic family of languages; its closest relatives being Turkish and Azerbaijani, with which it shares a relatively high degree of mutual intelligibility.

Turkmen has vowel harmony, is agglutinative and has no grammatical gender. Word order is subject–object–verb.

Written Turkmen today is based on the Teke (Tekke) dialect. The other dialects are Nohurly, Ýomud, Änewli, Hasarly, Nerezim, Gökleň, Salyr, Saryk, Ärsary and Çowdur. The Russian dialect is Trukhmen. The Teke dialect is sometimes (especially in Afghanistan) referred to as "Chagatai", but like all Turkmen dialects it reflects only a limited influence from classical Chagatai.

Writing system

Turkmen written language was formed in the 13-14th centuries.^[11] During this period, the Arabic alphabet was used extensively for writing. Already in the 18th century, there was a rich literature in the Turkmen language. At the same time, the literacy of the population in their native language remained at low levels; book publishing was extremely limited, and the first primer in the Turkmen language appeared only in 1913, while the first newspaper ("Transcaspian native newspaper") was printed in 1914.^[12]

The Arabic script was not adapted to the phonetic features of the Turkic languages. Thus, it did not have necessary signs to designate specific sounds of the Turkmen language, and at the same time there were many letters to designate Arabic sounds that were not in the Turkmen language.

During the first years after the establishment of the Soviet power, the Arabic alphabet of the Turkmens of the USSR was reformed twice, in 1922 and 1925. In the course of the reforms, letters with diacritics were introduced to denote Turkic phonemes; and letters were abolished for sounds that are absent in the Turkmen language.^[13]

The Turkmens of Afghanistan and Iran continue to use Arabic script.^[14]

In January 1925, on the pages of the republican newspaper "Türkmenistan", the question of switching to a new, Latin alphabet was raised. After the first All-Union Turkological Congress in Baku (February-March 1926), the State Academic Council under the People's Commissariat of Education of the Turkmen SSR developed a draft of a new alphabet. On January 3, 1928, the revised new Latin alphabet was approved by the Central Executive Committee of the Turkmen SSR.

At the end of the 1930s, the process of the Cyrillization of writing began throughout the USSR. In January 1939, the newspaper "Sowet Türkmenistany" published a letter from teachers in Ashgabat and the Ashgabat region with an initiative to replace the Turkmen (Latin) script with Cyrillic. The Presidium of the Supreme

Soviet of the Turkmen SSR instructed the Research Institute of Language and Literature to draw up a draft of a new alphabet. The teachers of the Ashgabat Pedagogical Institute and print workers also took part in the development of the new writing system. In April 1940, the draft alphabet was published.

In May 1940, the Council of People's Commissars of the Turkmen SSR adopted a resolution on the transition to a new alphabet of all state and public institutions from July 1, 1940 and on the beginning of teaching the new alphabet in schools from September 1 of the same year.^[15]

After the dissolution of USSR, in January 1993, a meeting was held at the Academy of Sciences of Turkmenistan on the issue of replacing the Cyrillic with the Latin alphabet, at which a commission was formed to develop the alphabet. In February, a new version of the alphabet was published in the press. On April 12, 1993, the Mejlis of Turkmenistan approved a presidential decree on the new alphabet.^[16]

Grammar

Turkmen is a highly agglutinative language, in that much of the grammar is expressed by means of suffixes added to nouns and verbs. It is very regular compared with many other languages of non-Turkic group. For example, obalardan "from the villages" can be analysed as oba "village", -lar (plural suffix), -dan (ablative case, meaning "from"); alýaryn "I am taking" as al "take", -ýar (present continuous tense), -yn (1st person singular).

Another characteristic of Turkmen is vowel harmony. Most suffixes have two or four different forms, the choice between which depends on the vowel of the word's root or the preceding suffix: for example, the ablative case of obalar is obalardan "from the villages" but, the ablative case of itler "dogs" is itlerden "from the dogs".

Literature

Turkmen literature comprises oral compositions and written texts in Old Oghuz Turkic and Turkmen languages. Turkmens are direct descendants of the Oghuz Turks, who were a western Turkic people that spoke the Oghuz branch of the Turkic language family.

The leading Turkmen poet is Magtymguly Pyragy, who wrote in the 18th century. His language represents a transitional stage between Chagatai and spoken Turkmen.

Vocabulary

Numbers

Number	Turkmen	Number	Turkmen
0	nol	10	on
1	bir	20	ýigrimi
2	iki	30	otuz
3	üç	40	kyrk
4	dört	50	elli
5	bäş	60	altmyş
6	alty	70	ýetmiş
7	ýedi	80	segsen
8	sekiz	90	togsan
9	dokuz	100	ýüz
		1000	müň

Note: Numbers are formed identically to other Turkic languages, such as Turkish. So, eleven (11) is "on bir" (ten-one). Two thousand seventeen (2017) is "iki müň on ýedi" (two-thousand-ten-seven).

Colors

English	Turkmen
black	gara
blue	gök
brown	goňur, mele
grey	çal
green	ýaşyl
orange	narynç, mämişi
pink	gülgün
purple	benewşe, melewşe
red	gyzyl
white	ak
yellow	sary

Basic expressions

English	Turkmen
yes	hawa
no	ýok
goodbye	sag boluň, hoş
good morning	ertiriňiz haýyrly bolsun
good evening	agşamyňyz haýyrly bolsun
good night	gijäňiz rahat bolsun
please	-aý/-äý ^[b]
thank you	sag boluň
Do you speak English?	Siz iňlis dilinde gepleýärsiňizmi?
I don't speak Turkmen	Men türkmen dilinde geplemeýärin
What does it mean?	Munuň manysy näme?

"Türkmeniň"

"Türkmeniň" is a great example of the Turkmen language. It's the most famous poem among the Turkmen people, composed by Magtymguly. The poem depicts the beauty of the Turkmen land, praises valiancy and spirit of the Turkmen people, and calls for the unity of all Turkmen.

The following is Magtymguly's "Türkmeniň" poem with the text transliterated into Turkmen (Latin) letters, whereas the original language is preserved. Second column is the poem's Turkish translation, while the third one is its English translation.

Jeýhun bilen bahry-Hazar	Nehr-i Ceyhun	Bahr-ı	Between the Amu-Darya and the Caspian
arasy,	Hazar arası,	sea,	
Çöl üstünden öser ýeli	Çöl üstünden eser yeli		The wind of the Turkmen expands from the
türkmeniň;	Türkmen'in.		desert.
Gül-gunçasý – gara	Gül goncası kara gözüm		The bud of a flower- the blackness of my
gözüm garasy,	karası,		eye
Gara dagdan iner sili	Kara dağdan iner seli		From the dark mountains comes the flood
türkmeniň.	Türkmen'in.		of Turkmen.

Hak sylamyş bardyr onuň	Hak sılamış vardır onun	The Almighty blessed this land. His
saýasy,	sayesi,	shadow is present.
Çyrpynşar çölünde neri,	Çırpınır çölünde neri,	A sandstorm in its desert, a white camel,
maýasy,	mayası.	Color upon color of blooming flowers on
Reňbe-reň gül açar ýaşyl	Rengarenk gül açar yeşil	the green plains,
ýaýlasy,	yaylası,	The Turkmen desert has drowned into
Gark bolmuş reýhana çöli	Gark olmuş reyhana çölü basil.	
türkmeniň.	Türkmen'in.	

Its beautiful woman will come out covered

Al-ýaşyl bürenip çykar	Al yeşil bürünüp çıkar	in green,
perisi,	perisi	The smell of Amber will spread,
Kükeýip bark urar anbaryň	Kükeyip bark urup amberin	Bey, Honor, the White-bearded (elder) is
ysy,	isi,	the owner of the yurt,
Beg, töre, aksakal ýurduň	Bey, töre, aksakal yurdun	The beautiful land of the Turkmen catches

eýesi, Küren tutar gözel türkmeniň.	iyesi, Küren tutar gözel Türkmen'in.	the colt. He is the son of a brave man, his father is valiant,
Ol merdiň ogludyr, mertdir pederi, Görogly serhoşdyr seri, Dagda, düzde kowsa, saýýatlar, diri Ala bilmez, ýolbars ogly türkmeniň.	O merdin oğludur, merttir pederi, Köroğlu kardeşi, sarhoştur seri, Dağda, düzde kovsa avcılar diri Alamaz arslan oğlu Türkmen'in.	Görogly is his brother, drunk is his head, If the hunters chase him in the mountains and valleys, The lion son of Turkmen cannot be caught alive Hearts, souls and will unite as one, If it draws deep, the lands and rocks will melt
Köňüller, ýürekler bir bolup başlar, Tartsa ýygyn, erär topraklar-daşlar, Bir suprada taýýar kylynsa aşlar, Göteriler ol ykbaly türkmeniň.	Gönüller, yürekler bir olup başlar, Tartsa yığın erir topraklar, Bir sofrada hazır kılınsa aşlar, Yücelenir o ikbali Türkmen'in.	If the food is ready on one dinner table It will raise the fate of the Turkmen His soul will fly when on horseback, The mountains will turn to lava upon his glance, When the river flows, it brings honey, The dams will not hold the flood of Turkmen.
Köňül howalanar ata çykanda, Daglar lagla döner gyýa bakanda, Bal getirer, joşup derýa akanda, Bent tutdurmaz, gelse sili türkmeniň.	Gönül havalanır ata çıkanda, Dağlar la'le döner dönüp bakanda, Bal getirir coşup derya akanda, Bent vurdurmaz, gelse, selifade, Türkmen'in.	He will not despair, and will not lose on the battle day, He will not be swayed by curses or the evil, Will not separate from its nightingale and The Turkmen rose will forever blossom.
Gapyl galmaz, döwüş günü har olmaz, Gargyşa, nazara giriftar olmaz, Bilbilden aýrylyp, solup, saralmaz, Daýym anbar saçar güli türkmeniň.	Gafil kalmaz döwüş günü har olmaz, Kargyşa, nazara giriftar olmaz, Bülbülden ayrılıp, solup zar kalmaz, Daim amber saçar, gülü Türkmen'in.	The clans are brothers, and the tribes are friends, Their fates are tied, by the light of God When the brave get on horses, it's for the battle, The paths of the Turkmen lead to its enemies.
Tireler gardaşdyr, urug ýarydyr, Ykballar ters gelmez hakyň nurudyr, Mertler ata çykça, söweş sarydyr, Ýow üstüne ýörär ýoly türkmeniň.	Tireler kardeşdir, uruk yaridir, Ikballer ters gelmez Hakk'ın nurudur, Mertler ata çıkça savaş yarıdır, Yov üstüne yürür yolu Türkmen'in.	He will come out like drunk (fervent, mad), will not despair, He will move mountains, his path will not be blocked, My eyes will not gaze away, and the soul will not muse, Magtymguly speaks the language of the Turkmen.
Serhoş bolup çykar, jiger daglanmaz, Daşlary syndyrar, ýoly Taşlary parçalar, yolu	Sarhoş olup çıkar ciğer dağlanmaz, Taşları parçalar, yolu	

baglanmaz,	bağlanmaz,
Gözüm gaýra düşmez	Gözüm gayre düşmez,
köňül eglenmez,	gönül eğlenmez,
Magtymguly – sözlär tili	Mahtumkulu söyler tili
türkmeniň.	Türkmen'in ^[17]

Notes

- Third official language in areas where Turkmens are majority^[2]
- aý/-äý are verb suffixes, which can be seen in "Maňa beräý!" (please give it to me).

Further reading

- Nicholas Awde; William Dirks; A. Amandurdyev (2005). *Turkmen: Turkmen-English, English-Turkmen Dictionary & Phrasebook* (https://books.google.com/books?id=SEOOeq7vBTAC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false). Hippocrene Books. ISBN 978-0-7818-1072-2.

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External links

- Turkmen grammar and orthography rules (Turkmen) (http://enedilim.com/turkmen_dili) (*in Turkmen*)
- Turkmen - English Dictionary with searchable reverse dictionary (<http://turkmen.webonary.org/en/>)
- Turkmen - English / English - Turkmen Dictionary (a) (<http://www.terjime.com>)
- Turkmen - English / English - Turkmen Dictionary (b) (<https://web.archive.org/web/20120913105209/http://www.chaihana.com/dict.pdf>) [1] (<http://www.chaihana.com/dicet.txt>) [2] (<https://web.archive.org/web/20160318135448/http://www.chaihana.com/dicte.txt>)
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- Omniglot page on Turkmen (<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/turkmen.htm>)
- Turkmen language online transliteration (<http://tmlit.turkmenworld.com/>)
- Ajapsozluk.com Ever-growing dictionary of Turkmen language (<http://www.ajapsozluk.com/>)
- Turkmen<>Turkish dictionary (<http://ctle.pau.edu.tr/tmtr>) (Pamukkale University)

- Turkmen video, recorded for Wikitongues (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NmmrJbZvWmc>)
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